

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
(UPDATED)

Spalding & Son, Inc.
Reciprocal Right-of-Way Agreement Amendment
Application and Road Construction
- Iron Creek -

EA# OR-117-04-11

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
MEDFORD DISTRICT
GRANTS PASS RESOURCE AREA

February 2005

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
MEDFORD DISTRICT

EA COVER SHEET

RESOURCE AREA: Grants Pass EA Number OR-117-04-11
ACTION/TITLE: Spalding & Son, Inc. Iron Creek Amendment Application and Road
Construction Project
LOCATION: T37S, R6W, Section 26, Josephine Co., Oregon, Willamette Meridian

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1.0 Introduction

This environmental assessment (EA) is an update of the project's EA prepared in August 2004. Public review and comments received on this EA, some new resource information, and further development and refinement of the proposed action made by the applicant as they did additional discussion with the state and a neighbor are the reason for this update. It will assist in the decision making process by assessing the environmental and human effects resulting from implementing the proposed project or alternatives. This EA will also assist in determining if an environmental impact statement (EIS) needs to be prepared or if a finding of no significant impact (FONSI) is appropriate.

This EA tiers to or is consistent with the following documents:

- (1) *Final EIS and Record of Decision for the Medford District Resource Management Plan (RMP)* (June 1995)
- (2) *Final Supplemental EIS on Management of Habitat for Late-Successional and Old-Growth Forest Related Species within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl* (February 1994) and its *Record of Decision for Amendments to Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management Planning Documents Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl* and its attachment A entitled *Standards and Guidelines for Management of Habitat for Late-Successional and Old-Growth Forest Related Species Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl* (NFP)(April 1994).
- (3) *Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for Amendment to the Survey & Manage, Protection Buffer, and other Mitigation Measures Standards and Guidelines* (March 2000), and the *Record of Decision and Standards and Guidelines for Amendment to the Survey & Manage, Protection Buffer, and other Mitigation Measures Standards and Guidelines* (January 2001)
- (4) *Final Supplemental EIS for Clarification of Language in the 1994 Record of Decision for the Northwest Forest Plan National Forests and Bureau of Land Management Districts Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl: Proposal to Amend Wording about the Aquatic Conservation Strategy* (October 2003), and the *Record of Decision Amending Resource Management Plans for Seven Bureau of Land Management Districts and Land and Resource Management Plans for Nineteen National Forests Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl: Decision to Clarify Provisions Relating to the Aquatic Conservation Strategy* (March 2004)
- (5) *Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement to remove or Modify the survey and Manage Mitigation Measures Standards and Guidelines* (January 2004) and the *Record of Decision to Remove or Modify the Survey and Manage Mitigation Measure Standards and Guidelines in Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management Planning Document within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl*. (March 2004)
- (6) *Record of Decision and Resource Plan Amendment for Management of Port-Orford-Cedar in southwest Oregon, Coos Bay, Medford, and Roseburg Districts* (May 2004) and the *Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for the Management of Port-Orford-Cedar in Southwest Oregon* (January 2004)

Planning and biological surveys for this project began prior to the March 2004 ROD that changed the Survey and Manage program. The March 2004 ROD (p. 8), item 6 cited above, does allow such

a project to be completed under the S&M standards and guidelines. This project is designed in accordance with these standards and guides.

1.1 Purpose of and Need for Action

Spalding & Son, Inc. have asked to amend their reciprocal right-of-way agreement with the BLM for hauling forest products using existing BLM roads. Due to a lack of access across private property, Spalding’s application also includes a request to construct a road across BLM land that would connect two existing roads to facilitate accessing their land. The Spalding parcels are isolated, surrounded by BLM and private lands.

1.2 Project Location

Project area maps are in Appendix A.

1.3 Land Use Allocation Objectives

The project is located in the Applegate Adaptive Management Area (AMA). Management objectives for the different land use allocations are in the NFP and the Medford District RMP.

2.0 Proposed Action and Alternatives

2.1 Alternative 1: No Action

The no action alternative is defined as not implementing the proposed action, thus denying Spalding & Son, Inc.’s application. This would deny Spalding permission to construct a road on BLM land and use certain existing BLM roads to haul forest products from their lands.

The no action alternative serves as a baseline for evaluating the environmental effects of the action alternative. Inclusion of this alternative is done without regard to whether or not it is consistent with the Medford District RMP. The no action alternative is a continuation of current environmental conditions and trends.

2.2 Alternative 2: Proposed Action

The proposed action is to grant Spalding their requested amendment to their reciprocal right-of-way permit to: a) use certain BLM roads for hauling of forest products and, b) construct approximately 625’ of road across BLM (see Map 1, Appendix A).

Spalding would be granted permission to use the BLM roads listed in Table 1 and shown on Map 3 to haul forest products. Spalding would be required to renovate these roads by surface blading, cleaning the ditches and culverts, and completing roadside brushing as needed for safety and visibility. New 18” culverts would be installed at one intermittent stream and one ephemeral draw (See Map 2, Overview Map). Road use would be restricted to dry periods.

Table 1: BLM Haul Roads

Road No.	Surface Type	Length (miles)
37-6-22B	Natural	0.36
37-6-22D	Natural	0.08
37-6-22F	Natural	0.25
37-6-22H	Natural	0.20
37-6-26	Natural	0.15
37-6-26.1	Natural	0.08
37-6-26.2	Natural	0.18
37-6-26.3A	New construction	0.12
37-6-26.3B	Natural	0.60
37-6-25B	Pit run rock	0.05

Spalding proposes to construct two segments of new road totaling approximately 625' (see Map 1). Segment 37-6-26.3A (425') would be constructed in accordance with the following specifications. The road to be constructed would traverse a ridge with a maximum grade of 15%. The road would have a 16' wide subgrade (14' running width), and a 2% outslope for drainage. Vegetation would be cleared 15' vertically and horizontally from the road/road edges. The right-of-way would be 35' wide. The road would be natural surfaced except within 100' of the pond in section 26, which is a domestic water source. This portion of the road would be surfaced with 6" of rock. The road within 300' of the pond would be watered for dust abatement, contingent upon a water source being located on Spalding's land. Truck speed would be limited when hauling to reduce dust. Roadwork in the vicinity of the pond would be limited to the Oregon State in stream permitted work window (June 15 to September 1). The current culvert at the pond (see Map 1) would be replaced with a pipe arch sized to accommodate a 50 year storm event (65"x40"). Rip rap would be installed around the inlet and outlet. The road would be blocked at the junction with road #37-6-22B after use. Silt fencing (barrier cloth) and straw bales would be placed on the pond side road edge to trap sediment and prevent it from entering the pond. Exposed soil areas would be seeded with native species and mulched.

The second segment of new road would total approximately 200'. It would be constructed to permit hauling from the western part of Road 37-6-22 onto road 37-6-26.2 and would be built to the following specifications: The road would have a 16' wide subgrade (14' running width), and a 2% outslope for drainage. Vegetation would be cleared 5' vertically and horizontally from the road/road edges. The right-of-way would be 35' wide. The road would be natural surfaced

2.3 Project Design Features

The following project design features (PDFs) are proposed by the BLM's interdisciplinary team to be included with the issuance of any permit. They are "standard" PDFs based on the BLM's best management practices. Their purpose is to preclude potential adverse environmental impacts which might stem from project implementation. PDF implementation is assumed in the discussions of environmental consequences below.

- Do not use BLM haul roads when they are wet to a point that road rutting would occur. Do not construct the new road segments when conditions are wet or during the wet season (October 15-May 15).

- Install standard BLM water dips with protected (armored) outlets.
- Slash created during clearing activities would be placed in a wind row below the road within the right-of-way in order to help capture any road related sediment.
- Snags that must be felled for safety reasons or that are within the proposed ROW would be left on site.
- Confine construction equipment to roadway construction limits.
- Clear construction debris from ditches and culverts prior to fall rains.
- Cultural surveys have revealed no sites. If cultural sites are found during project implementation, activities around the site would halt until a BLM archaeologist reviewed the site and determined appropriate protection measures.
- Heavy equipment would be clean and free of leaks before any use adjacent to or within stream channels. Spill containment materials would be kept on site at all times. Equipment refueling would not occur within 150' of streams.
- During culvert replacement / pipe arch installation, heavy equipment would be kept out of the stream channel to the greatest extent possible.
- Sediment influx into the stream would be minimized through sediment control measures such as the use of appropriate filters/filter fabric. Filter cloth would be used during culvert removal, placement of rip rap, and below sediment traps and in the stream bed below the crossing.

3.0 Environmental Consequences

Only substantive site specific environmental changes caused by implementing the proposed action or alternatives are discussed in this chapter. If an ecological component is not discussed, it should be assumed that the resource specialists have considered effects to that component and found that the proposed action or alternatives would have minimal or no effects. In addition, unless addressed specifically, the following were found to be unaffected by the proposed action or alternatives: air quality, areas of critical environmental concern (ACECs), cultural and historical resources, Native American religious sites, recreation, prime or unique farmlands, floodplains, endangered, threatened or sensitive plant, animal or fish species, water quality, wetlands/riparian zones, wild and scenic rivers and wilderness areas. Port-Orford cedar does not occur in the project area.

3.1 Soils and Hydrology

3.1.1 Affected Environment

The project area is in the Applegate-Murphy 6th field watershed and the Murphy 5th field watershed. According to the Josephine County Soil Survey, the soil type in the project area is 1D-Abegg gravelly loam, 12-20% slopes. The typical landscape is dissected high terrace.

3.1.2 Alternative 1: No Action

Under the no action alternative, soils and streams would remain in their present condition.

3.1.3 Alternative 2: Proposed Action

The proposed road construction is partially located in a riparian zone. However, because the road would be built when the intermittent creek is dry and all exposed soil surfaces would be seeded and mulched, only a minimal, inconsequential amount of sediment would likely reach the creek. The new road is expected to contribute only minimally to overland water flow due to its outsloped design.

3.2 Botany

The project area is within the range of *Fritillaria gentneri* and *Lomatium cookii*, federally endangered species. Botany surveys were completed in spring, 2003. A small amount of potentially suitable *Fritillaria* habitat was noted but no S&M or Bureau special status were located. The project would not affect any of these species.

3.3 Fisheries

3.3.1 Affected Environment

The project area contains intermittent streams and ephemeral dry draws which flow into the Applegate River and Panther Creek. One perennial stream, downstream of the pond, is also located in the project area which flows into the Applegate River. Panther Creek contains steelhead and is an intermittent stream that drains into the Applegate River. The Applegate River contains chinook, coho, steelhead, and cutthroat.

3.3.2 Alternative 1: No Action

Under the no action alternative, condition trends in Panther Creek and the Applegate River would remain unchanged.

3.3.3 Alternative 2: Proposed Action

The proposed haul routes, which would also have renovation and maintenance, cross 3 ephemeral dry draws and 4 intermittent streams. These streams and draws flow approximately 0.75 to 1.5 miles to fish in Panther Creek and the Applegate River. The culverts to be replaced on the intermittent stream and the ephemeral draw are located over 1 mile from fish in the Applegate

River. Due to the distance from fish, along with PDFs, no effects to fish or fish habitat are anticipated.

The new road construction is proposed above an unnamed tributary and is partially within the riparian area. This unnamed tributary is a non-fish bearing perennial stream, which drains into the Applegate River. Approximately 150' of the proposed road would go through the riparian zone but would not cross any streams. Fish are located approximately 0.75 miles downstream in the Applegate River. It is highly unlikely that sediment from the new road construction in the Applegate River because of the distance from fish, no stream crossings, and the PDFs (see soils and hydrology effects, above). Therefore, no effects to fish or fish habitat are expected.

The 65"x 40" culvert to be installed is located on a perennial stream which flows from the pond. The site is located approximately 0.75 miles from fish in the Applegate River. Due to the distance from fish, along with PDFs, no effects to fish or fish habitat are anticipated.

3.4 Wildlife

3.4.1 Affected Environment

The proposed new road construction would occur within a mature mixed conifer stand dominated by Douglas-fir, ponderosa pine and sugar pine in the 21+'' DBH size class. There are no known listed threatened or endangered (T&E) species within or adjacent to the project area. The project area is within suitable spotted owl foraging habitat. The proposed new road construction would remove <1 acre of spotted owl foraging habitat. No suitable spotted owl nesting habitat occurs within or adjacent to the project area.

Mollusk surveys were completed in the spring of 2002 and no Survey & Manage (S&M) mollusks were detected. There is marginal red tree vole habitat within the project area. Red tree vole surveys were completed in the spring of 2002 and no RTV nests were located.

The project area is not suitable great gray owl habitat.

No formal surveys for special status species have been conducted in the project area. Some special status species habitat may occur within the proposed road route, such as down logs and snags. However, no large snags would be lost as a result of this project. There are several snags and sufficient amounts of coarse woody debris in the stand adjacent to the proposed road construction.

3.4.2 Alternative 1: No Action

Stand conditions along the proposed road route would remain the same and no habitat modifications would occur. There would be no effects to T&E, S&M, or special status wildlife species.

3.4.3 Alternative 2: Proposed Action

There are no anticipated effects to any wildlife species listed under the Endangered Species Act, so

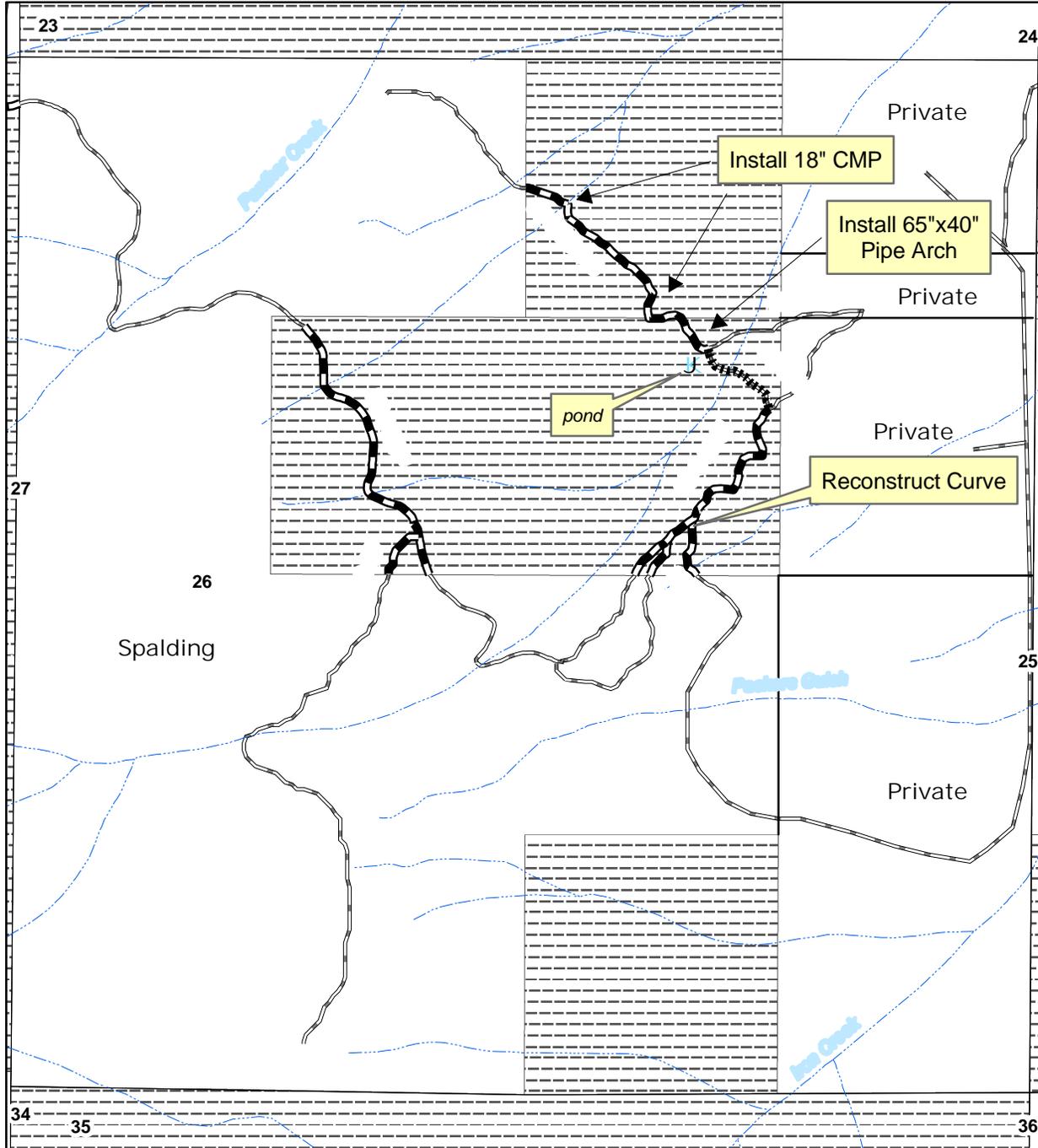
ESA consultation with the USFWS is not necessary. A small amount of potential habitat for special status species and neotropical birds may be removed. However, this loss would be negligible due to the large amounts of suitable habitat to be retained on BLM land nearby. Project activities would also occur outside of the critical nesting period for neotropical birds, further reducing potential impacts. The proposed actions may disrupt some individuals of sensitive species and could cause habitat loss in some cases. However, this alternative is not expected to affect long term population viability of any species known to be in the area or lead to the need to list sensitive wildlife species due to the abundance of habitat nearby.

4.0 Agencies and Persons Consulted

The Oregon Water Resources Board was consulted during the planning of this project regarding water rights at the pond. The applicant consulted with Oregon Department of Forestry in the design of the crossing of the domestic water source / stream.

Copies of the EA will be available for public review in the BLM Medford District Office and online at www.or.blm.gov/Medford/planning. A formal 21 day public comment period will be held following an announcement in the Grants Pass Daily Courier. Written comments should be addressed to Abbie Jossie, Field Manager, Grants Pass Resource Area, at 3040 Biddle Road, Medford, OR 97504. Emailed comments may be sent to or110mb@or.blm.gov.

Project Map 1
 Iron Creek Road Construction
 T37S-R6W Sec. 26



3

Legend

- | | |
|-----------------------|------------------|
| Existing Roads | Ownership |
| Roads to be Renovated | BLM |
| New_Construction | PVT |

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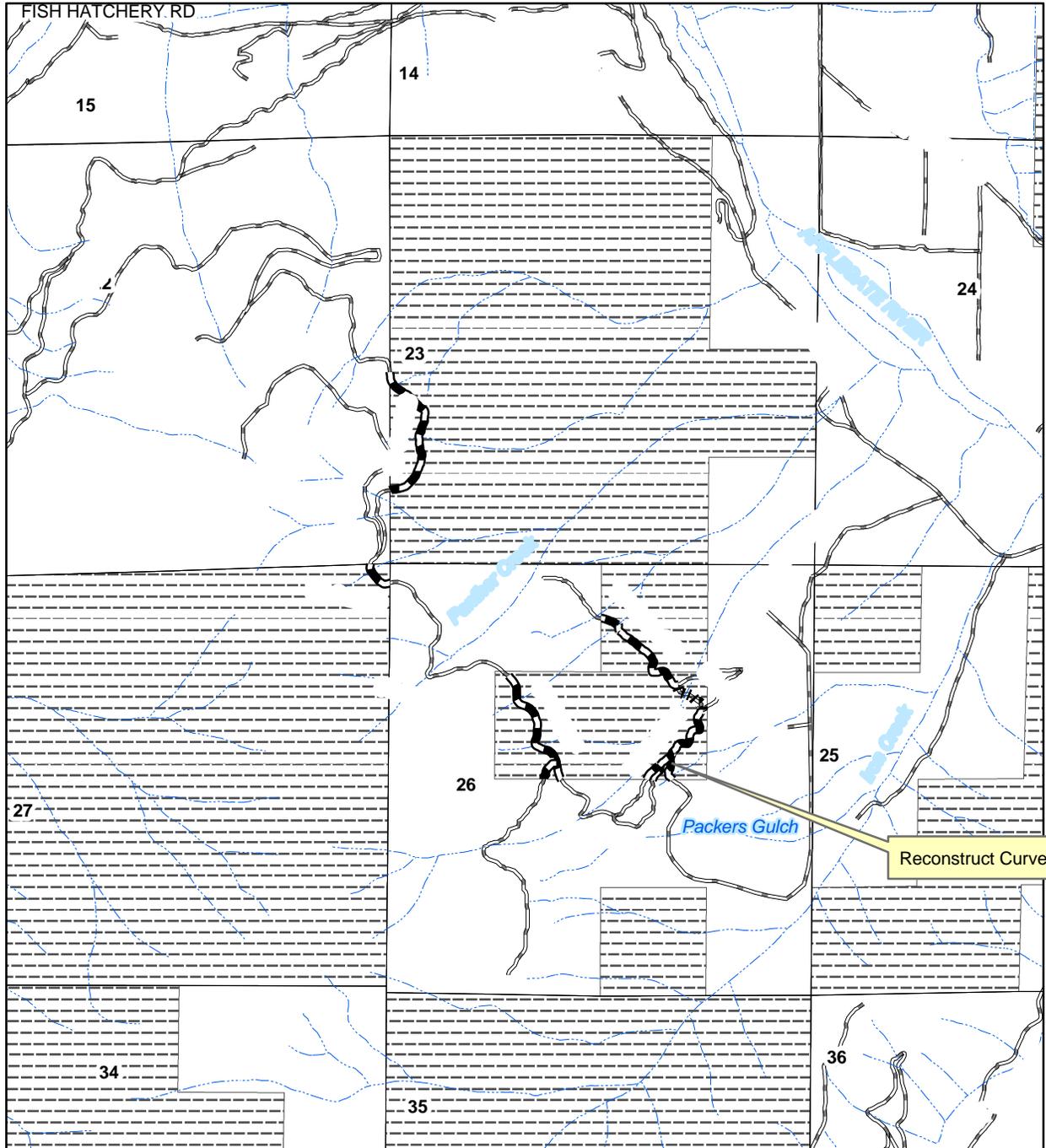
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Overview Map 2

Iron Creek Road Construction/Renovation

T37S-R6W Sec. 22, 23, 26



3

Legend		Ownership	
	Existing Road		BLM
	Roads to be Renovated		PVT
	New Construction		

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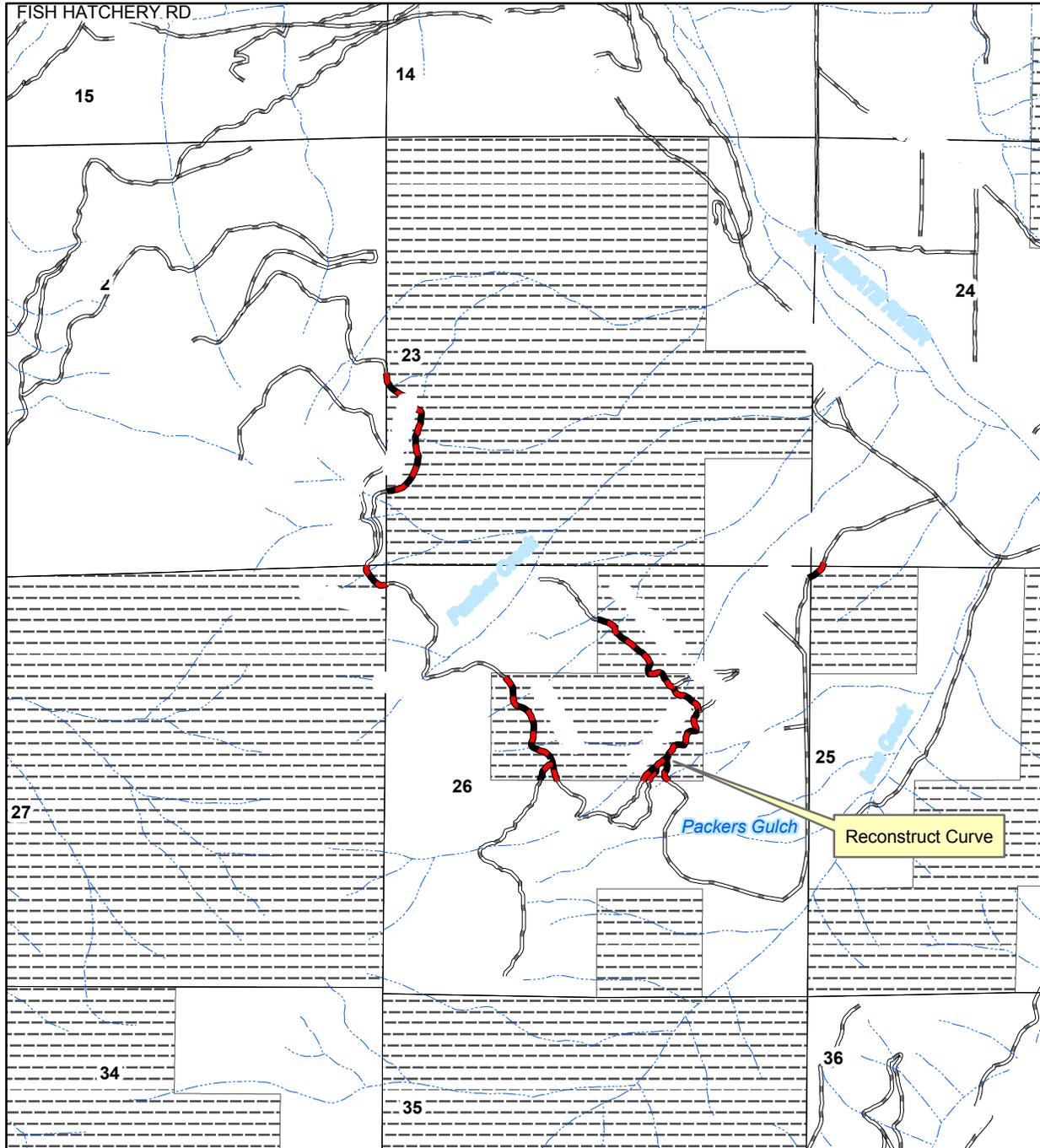
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Haul Routes Over BLM Map 3 Iron Creek Road Construction/Renovation T37S-R6W Sec. 22, 23, 26



Legend

	BLM Road to Haul Over	Ownership
	Existing Road	 BLM
		 PVT

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